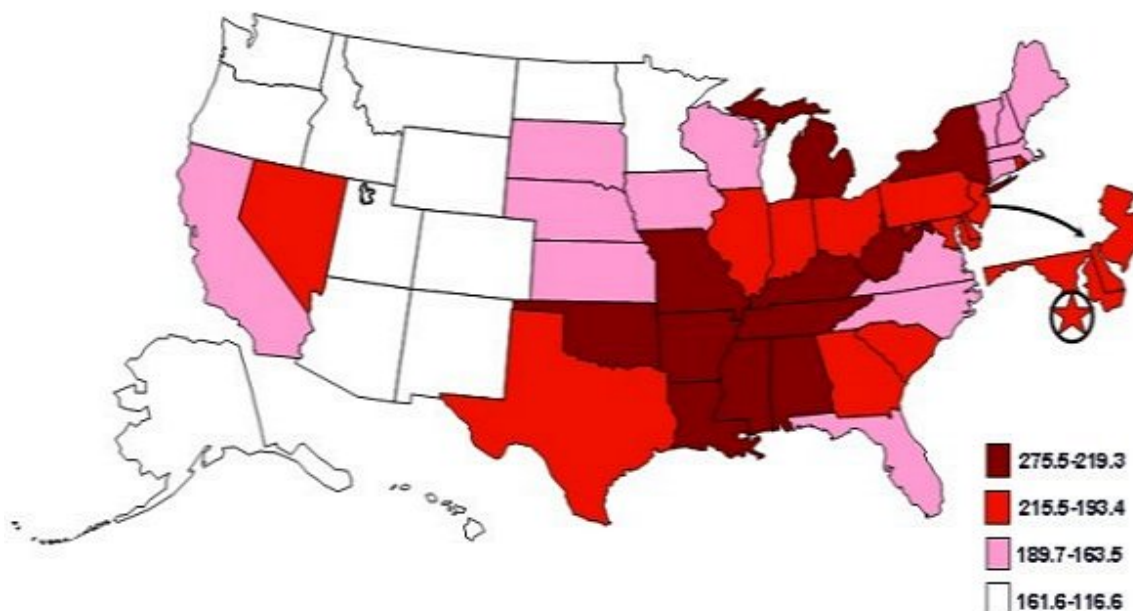


## Women and Heart Disease Fact Sheet

### Death Rates for Diseases of the Heart per 100,000 Women, 2002



Age adjusted to the 2000 U.S. Population; International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) codes: I00-I09, I11, I13, I20-I51.  
Source: NCHS

### Facts on Women and Heart Disease

- For this fact sheet, the term "heart disease" refers to the broadest category of "diseases of the heart" as defined by the International Classification of Diseases and used by CDC's National Center for Health Statistics. This category includes acute rheumatic fever, chronic rheumatic heart disease, hypertensive heart disease, coronary heart disease, pulmonary heart disease, congestive heart failure, and any other heart condition or disease.
- Although heart disease is sometimes thought of as a "man's disease," it is the leading cause of death for both women and men in the United States with women comprising 51% of the total heart disease deaths.
- Of the 1,244,123 deaths among women in 2002, 28.6% were due to diseases of the heart.
- Awareness of heart disease as the number one killer of women:
  - Good news: According to surveys by the American Heart Association, the percentage of women who spontaneously identified heart disease as the number one killer of women increased from 30% in 1997 to 46% in 2003.

- Bad news: Only 13% of the women in the 2003 survey perceived heart disease as their greatest health problem. While this is an increase from the 7% level in 1997, it still reflects an attitude that heart disease is "not my problem."
- Heart disease is often perceived as an "older woman's disease," and it is the leading cause of death among women aged 65 years and older. However, heart disease is the 3rd leading cause of death among women aged 25–44 years of age and the 2nd leading cause of death among women aged 45–64 years.
- In 2002, age-adjusted death rates for heart disease were higher among black women (169.7 per 100,000) than among white women (131.2 per 100,000).
- There is a range of risk for heart disease depending on family and personal health history and the treatment recommendations from a physician will depend on a woman's level of risk. Regardless of the risk level, these life style modifications are recommended for all women:
  - Cigarette smoking cessation
  - 30 minutes physical activity most days
  - Heart healthy diet Weight maintenance/reduction
  - Evaluation and treatment of depression

## **CDC Activities to Reduce the Burden of Heart Disease Among Women**

- Co-Sponsoring International Conferences on Women, Heart Disease and Stroke (2000 and 2005); Member of Executive Steering Committee; Member of the Writing Group for The Victoria Declaration on Women, Heart Disease and Stroke, 2000.
- Supporting National Wear Red for Women days (2004–2005)
- Member of the Expert Panel for the AHA Guidelines: Evidence-Based Guidelines for Cardiovascular Disease Prevention in Women; Circulation 2004;109:672–673.
- On-going surveillance of heart disease and its risk factors by gender.

## **For More Information**

For more information on women and heart disease, visit the following Web sites:

- [CDC's Cardiovascular Health Program](#)
- [American Heart Association\\*](#)
  - Go Red for Women campaign
  - AHA Guidelines: Evidence-Based Guidelines for Cardiovascular Disease Prevention in Women
- [Association of Black Cardiologists\\*](#)
  - The African American Woman's Guide to a Healthy Heart
  - Heart Health for the Generations: A Guide for African-American Women featuring Maya Angelou
- [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](#)

- [The Heart Truth: A National Awareness Campaign for Women about Heart Disease](#)
- [The Healthy Heart Handbook for Women—2003 Edition](#)
- [Postmenopausal Hormone Therapy](#) — Estrogen alone or combined with progesterone should not be initiated nor continued to prevent CVD disease in post menopausal women.